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A COLLOQUY

Heartman's Historical Series No. 23

A COLLOQUY
ON
THE NECESSITY
OF
CLERGY IN GOVERNMENT

WRITTEN ABOUT 1799

With an Introduction by

RSE

SLIP OF ERRATA

Page 34, line 22; Expiration

Page 37, line 3; Piratical

Page 42, second line from bottom;
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The opinion is expressed that this play
is written by Th. Day

Original Manuscript
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Heartman's Historical Series No. 23



A COLLOQUY
ON
THE NECESSITY
OF
CLERGY IN GOVERNMENT

WRITTEN ABOUT 1799

With an Introduction by
ANSON ELY MORSE

Fifty copies reprinted from the Original Manuscript
for Charles F. Heartman

1917

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INTRODUCTION

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This "Colloquy on the Necessity of Clergy in Government" reproduces vividly the passions, prejudices and political opinions of the period from 1795 until 1815 and after. It was evidently written about 1800 by a New Englander of very moderate Federalistic beliefs.

The characters in the Colloquy are three. Grenville voices the convictions of that intolerable wing of the intolerant "Boston Faction," the Essex Junto, which was never noted for sweet reasonableness, broad political intelligence, or, after 1800, for patriotism. In him Fisher Ames and Timothy Pickering at their worst, struggle for utterance. While in his antagonist Belmont the rabid or foolish sentiments and delusions of Thomas Jefferson, Gideon Granger, Abraham Bishop or Benjamin Austin are fully exploited Lawrence is no less unusual and far from typical in his ideas. He presents the viewpoint of an extremely liberal and tolerant Federalist. Persons of such beliefs together with the average moderate Federalist were responsible for the failure of the disunionist faction of their party to carry out its treasonable designs between 1800 and 1815.

The title, however, is a misnomer, for there is almost nothing in the Colloquy concerning this "Necessity of the Clergy in Government." It is

singular that the clergy are so neglected, for their political power in the North at this time was extraordinarily great. Passing reference, indeed, is made to the patriotic endeavors of the ministers during the Revolution but their invaluable aid in the adoption of the Constitution is overlooked, as well as their decisive stand for government during the critical times just after the Revolution and during the height of the excitement caused by the French Revolution. Nothing is said of the current conviction that good government is founded upon religion and that without the latter the former is impossible. To a New Englander of that period the vital importance of the clergy was indisputable. The French Revolution was, if any proof were needed, incontrovertible evidence.

Liberalism in religious polity and belief had grown slowly in New England during the latter half of the Eighteenth Century. After the Revolution a concerted drive on Congregationalism and its alliance with the state was made by the various sects of Baptists, Methodists and Universalists and in Connecticut by the Episcopalians. The Revolution had to a certain extent loosened the shackles which in democratic eyes bound the people to degrading submission to the clergy.

It was not until 1795 that Democratic dislike of "pulpit drummers" broke out in virulent form. The chief cause was the complete change in the attitude of the clergy toward the French Revolution. At first they admired, then distrusted and finally openly denounced and vehemently attacked

France and its adherents in this country who, they declared, "ought to be treated as enemies of their country." The people were desired to mark such and to "let them wear the stigma of reproach due to the perfidious betrayers of their country . . . Of all traitors, they are the most aggravatedly criminal; of all villians, they are the most infamous and detestable." This violent attitude was largely due to the conviction that the French infidelity was a real and growing menace to both religion and good government; that the American people were being lead astray partly by their excessive and unbounded enthusiasm for all things French and partly by a systematic propaganda carried on by atheistical missionaries and "by the importation of pamphlets and pocket volumes for the common people and histories and encyclopedias for the learned." It was affirmed as a result that "multitudes had turned downright deists." However extravagant this statement may be the circulation of *Paine's Age of Reason*—in at least eight American editions before 1796—of Ethan Allen's *Oracles of Reason* and other books of similar import indicate a wide-spread interest among the laity which greatly scandalized the clergy. The anxiety of the godly turned into panic with the widely trumpeted discovery in 1798 of a "plot" by the Illuminanti to destroy religion. The clergy greatly disturbed before were now thoroughly aroused. They echoed the sentiments of the Rev. Mr. Dana of Newburyport, who declared in a sermon that their political and religious interests did not have in the American

Revolution that "close and indissoluble connection" which they now possess. "Shall those then," he asked, "who are set for the defense of the Gospel. . . basely desert their posts?" On the contrary his people could rest assured that their pastor's "efforts, however feeble, shall not be wanting to the cause of his threatened and suffering country."

How this dangerous irreligious influence from abroad was looked upon is well illustrated by an extract from a famous sermon preached by President Dwight of Yale. "For what end," he demanded, "shall we be connected with the French. . . is it that our churches may become the temples of reason, our Sabbath a decade, that we may change our holy worship into a dance of Jacobin phrenzy, and that we may behold a strumphet personating a Goddess on the altar of JEHOVAH? Shall our sons become the disciples of Voltaire . . . or our daughters the concubines of the Illuminanti?"

Among the "wise and virtuous" the Democrats were regarded as dangerous enemies to both church and state. When, as not infrequently happened, pointed remarks in church displeased the Democrats, they would rise and stalk out. On one such occasion a well known divine paused in his sermon to remark to his remaining parishioners that he was pleased to find he possessed one of the apostolic gifts namely the power of casting out devils. This viewpoint was not unusual. When the War of 1812 was declared, the minister at Groton, Mass., preached from John 8:44, "Ye are of your father, the Devil; and the lusts of

your father ye will do." The application of the text was the likening of President Madison to Beelzebub and the members of Congress who voted for the war to the subordinate devils who did his bidding. As late as 1816 the Hartford Courant, the leading paper of Connecticut, asserted "It is true that we can scarce converse with a Democrat—can hardly look upon a Democratic newspaper but we are offended with some political, religious or moral abomination." Jefferson commonly likened to Jereboam by the pious in New England, a man of peace and caution, who fought usually from a safe distance, threw prudence aside and raged, regardless of consequences, if he saw a chance to smite the New England clergy.

The Democrats did not receive these verbal chastisements with meekness or penitential humility. Loudly they reviled these clerical meddlers and worked industriously to overthrow their influence and undermine their authority. *The National Aegis*, a paper founded at Worcester by Jefferson's postmaster-general declared in 1802 that the clergy "forgetful of primitive purity. . . have by calumnies, misrepresentations and baseness, with a turpitude of heart, black and gangrened, been laboring to . . . sink to scorn and execration a faithful and virtuous administration." This is far more severe than the usual mild attack upon the clergy in New England. The Democratic papers outside of New England were not deterred by piety, prudence or propriety.

This play is both valuable and interesting as it pictures the storm and passions of a time when bitter partizanship divided the country into parties whose policies and predilections were more alien than American.

ANSON ELY MORSE.

Amherst, Mass.,
March 20, 1917.

CHARACTERS

GRENVILLEa Monarchist

BELMONTa Democrat

LAWRENCEa Federalist

A COLLOQUY ON CLERGY IN GOVERNMENT

ENTER BELMONT AND GRENVILLE

Grenville

Mr. Belmont, having lately paid some attention to the political situation of our country, I confess that to me its prospects appear gloomy and portentous. I have not the most distant idea that our present government will ever be established on solid foundations; and candor obliges me to acknowledge my indifference to its existence. Experience though very short has yet been sufficiently long to discover many radical defects in the federal constitution and I firmly believe that if these defects are not soon remedied anarchy will soon usurp the place of government and reign triumphant.

Belmont

I too, Mr. Grenville, have had my doubts with respect to the permanency of the federal constitution, but whether it remains permanent or not, in either case I feel equally secure; because after the ensuing election which I am confident will redound to the everlasting honor of the victorious "friends of liberty," the patriotic character then at the helm will preserve in their native purity the principles of liberty, and after the completion of another census, I shall be under no apprehensions

for the success of Republicanism, because the population in the middle and southern states has increased much more in proportion than that in New England; of course we may confidently calculate on a majority of Republicans in the succeeding congress. This being the fact, no danger need be apprehended from the energetic part of our present aristocratic constitution. But should the constitution be subverted another would spring up from the ashes perfectly free in its principles and completely destitute of "British" doctrines.

Grenville

I regret, Belmont, that our opinions are so diametrically opposite. That sentiments so directly hostile to the very existence of civil society should be espoused by you is not only astonishing but perfectly inexplicable. (*The very instant*) Whenever those sentiments gain general ground the happiness of America is at an end; to prevent their spread and to counteract their dreadful consequences demands the unremitting exertions of every friend to his country. 'Tis impossible for me to conceive how you can wish for a government more free than our present one; for my part it has been my prevailing opinion for three years past that the American people enjoy too much freedom; the licentiousness of the public papers amounts to a complete demonstration of the fact, and I sincerely believe, the happiness of the United States will never be secure, 'til a government more firm and energetic is established.

Belmont

Pray, Sir, what are your reasons for entertaining so despicable an opinion as this? Should it become general (*in any extensive degree*) monarchy must be the consequence.

Grenville

I will tell you, Sir; the ignorance of the people is great, and their disposition to embrace the means of knowledge is weak and languid. The human passions are excessively fiery and impetuous; the consequences of this general state of things, together with the want of fin'd habits and an uniform national character are not only incompatible with the perpetuation of a government of persuasion over the whole United States, but insuperable barriers to its existence for any length of time.

Belmont

This is the first time I ever heard the people who have been emphatically stil'd an "impartial and enlightened tribunal" branded with the opprobrious and disgraceful epithet "ignorant"; What! Are the independent freemen of America before whom in point of knowledge the world shrinks back and dreads a comparison to be reproached for their ignorance?

Grenville

Ever since the Revolution the "good sense" and highly "enlightened" situation of "the people" have been the favorite topic of orations and de-

clamations from one end of the continent to the other; yet this same "enlightened tribunal" have exhibited to the world their superlatively profound "good sense" by electing to a seat in congress the gentleman who first had the honor of being convicted and punish'd for sedition: They have patronis'd the "scape gallowses" of Europe; have thought it a duty not only to resist but also to excite insurrection against the government chosen by themselves and to clamor against taxes which were the unavoidable consequences of their disorganizing and iniquitous conduct and in addition to all this, bribery has elevated to high offices many a villain. If these facts and a general diffusion of knowledge throughout the nation are not incompatible, I'll give up the question.

Belmont

Two-thirds of what you say, Grenville, is nothing but an infamous, vile, aristocratical fabrication. Tories and Monarchists are constantly dressing up some scarecrows to prejudice the people against Republicanism and frighten them into despotism.

Grenville

All that I have said is fact (*and for the truth of it I appeal to everyone present*) and in consequence of this conduct our country is on the very brink of anarchy and civil war.

Belmont

On the brink of anarchy and civil war! There's

no kind of foundation for the supposition; it is a mere monarchical bugbear, and if you'll trace it up to its source, I'll venture my life you'll find it to be the fabrication of some superstitious bigoted old "priest": The "priests" (*particularly those of Connecticut*) have been celebrated for their ingenious fabrications, and within a few years their industry has (*inundated this country with * * * lies about ghosts, witches and illuminational Hobgoblins*) thrown into circulation thousands of lies, by which means the country is inundated with stories of ghosts, witches and Illuminational Hobgoblins.

Grenville

This, Belmont, is nothing less than the most wilful misrepresentation, and the very circumstance that half America believes such notorious falsehood proves incontrovertibly their wretched and profound ignorance.

Belmont

I have no doubt, Sir, of the fact, for in addition to newspaper paragraphs, fast day sermons and other demonstrative evidence of the fact, we have the testimony of the ingenious, the poetical and the philosophical Barlow, of him who has nobly dar'd in opposition to the bigoted and inquisitorial prejudices of his countrymen, to throw off the shackles of superstition and priestcraft and assert the genuine right of men and conscience.

Grenville

I am perfectly willing to allow the testimony

of (Joel) sic Barlow its full weight; (for out of the two thousand five hundred who have received their education at this college, many have been a disgrace both to themselves and this institution, yet among that numerous body, no name of which I have heard has so many legal pretensions to the title of "infamous" as that of Joel Barlow; at the very thought of him Hypocrecy blushes. He has dar'd to curse that religion by proclaiming which he once earn'd his bread! Disappointed in his expectations of office he has vilified the characters whom for the sake of promotion he once extoll'd to heaven! Connecticut blushes when compell'd to acknowledge her apostate son; and Yalensia weeps for having nourish'd with her milk so despicable a monster. From such characters as this, Belmont, you derive your information) but I can inform you from the best authority (that disdains a comparison with yours) that the country is in imminent danger of civil commotions, and in my opinion nothing can prevent them but a more energetic government.

Belmont

In the year Ninety-eight I was alarm'd for the safety of liberty, but the ground for alarm is now gone; I then thought that aristocracy would gain the victory: Soon did I then expect to see John Adams roll'd on the "wheels of splendor" over the mangled corpses of his political opponents and his chariot wheels dripping with the sacred blood of Republicans: But thank God! the

vigorous exertions of the Republican party have defeated and baffled his treasonable machinations: The Ides of March will soon give him leisure to revise his defense of monarchy, and with rapture I anticipate the prostration of aristocratic obstinacy before the sacred and divine goddess of Republicanism: Then will a pure Democratical constitution being firmly establish'd on the ruins and complete degradation of aristocracy defy the malignant efforts of Monarchists, old Tories and the British faction!

Grenville

That there should be difference of opinion on political subjects is ever to be expected and to condemn a man for his opinions when form'd on solid grounds and after mature deliberation is perhaps uncharitable, if not unjust; But when passionate invective is substituted for calm discussion, when the darts of calumny are level'd at the most virtuous characters in existence, and when an agonizing state of jealousy and uncertainty usurps the place of confidence and security, I confess I am sick of the liberty which originates and tolerates such a state of things, and 'though under the auspices of our present form of government the country has made astonishing progress in arts, sciences and commerce, and though her population and resources have increas'd with unexampled rapidity, yet the confusion, the clamor and the tumult have been so great, the opposition to every measure of government has been so extensive, I confess I see no pros-

pect of a peaceable state of things, I therefore ardently wish and most devoutly pray for a strong government, a government sufficiently powerful to crush all opposition to the will of the nation.

Belmont

That a man of your respectability, Grenville, whom I have ever suppos'd to be warmly attached to the principles of Republicanism should now veer about and advance sentiments directly in the teeth of freedom and which tend to the establishment of complete despotism is truly astonishing: But notwithstanding your seeming warmth, Grenville, I can't yet believe that you speak your real sentiments. You are only ridiculing ironically the bugbears of the British factions.

Grenville

I utter the genuine sentiments of my heart, and will give you my reasons for entertaining them. I confess that I was once a dupe to the theoretical nonsense of certain Democratical visionaries, but experience has taught me that the picture of democracy is not a true resemblance of the original, and that while she resembles the "painted prostitute" and "whited sepulchre" without, she is full of filthiness and "dead men's bones" within. The Licentious Goddess coquetish in her disposition, employs her dupes for her painters, and conscious of her native deformity appears portray'd like the "votary of Venus" in splendid garments. No wonder then that I young

and in experienc'd, should form prepositions in her favor from the false representations of her deluded followers: but I apprehend my delusion will appear less culpable, when it is considered that my ideas were in union with those of my superiors in age and wisdom. I had seen three millions of virtuous freemen actuated by a noble zeal in defense of liberty, after having broken the fetters of despotism, form and adopt with little contention, comparatively speaking, a constitution which being an improvement upon all previous systems was for some time the wonder and admiration of the world.

Although I thought the instrument recognis'd too many "English" principles, and that some of its most energetic parts were not perfectly compatible with the rights of the "genuine sons of liberty" yet its adoption fill'd me with enthusiasm: My own vanity arising from the circumstance that I was a native of America, contributed no doubt to render more vivid the colours of the picture: I then consider'd the prospects of this country uncommonly bright and cheering; I thought the floodgates of happiness were thrown open and a boundless torrent of felicity rushing in upon my country! (*Methinks*) Methought I then saw Columbia like the rising sun ascending with superior and increasing brilliancy to the zenith of national happiness and glory! Even the words "United States of America" possess'd a charm that came home to my heart with irresistible energy, and excited in my breast the most pleasing and agreeable emotions. My imagination depicted them as a "band of brothers" firmly unit-

ed not only by the circumstance of their having march'd in company to the combat, but by the more powerful ties of consanguinity and the federal compact. In anticipation I saw them, at home free from party spirit and faction, reverencing their rulers, strictly obeying laws enacted by themselves, shutting up the avenues of foreign influence and firmly united in support of laws declar'd constitutional by the judiciary and a majority of the nation:—abroad respected and (*dreaded*) feared by all. Young and ardent, I already saw my country avenging herself on the haughty despots who had ignominiously attempted to crush her in her cradle; Kings were trembling! thrones were tottering! and the power of monarchs crumbling to dust before the American trident! In short, Sir, if luxuriant harvests had sprung up spontaneously from the “sacred soil of liberty,” and in fact, if the air had become nectar and ambrosia, under the influence of the federal constitution, I should not have been astonish'd.

This is a faint picture of my anticipations, but so far from being realized it has prov'd diametrically opposite to the real state of facts. Although the philanthropist had reason to think that liberty had found a retreat and that American happiness was based on (*rocky*) a foundation(*s*) (*and*) of rock though the country has in fact made astonishing improvements, and notwithstanding the circumstance that if united she might safely mock the efforts of the universe, (*after the lapse of only thirteen years*) we find this same prolific land of liberty torn by parties! Faction has rear'd her disorganizing head! corruption in our elections is

openly and unblushingly practis'd! The presses from Florida to New Brunswick unceasingly teem with the most deadly and inveterate calumny against the officers of government. Volumes of appeals to the passions of the people and folios of lies are weekly and industriously circulated through every corner of the country. A plan has been systematis'd and brought into operation not only to circulate, but also to perpetuate to distant posterity the disgraceful licentiousness of the present day! Foreigners who have fled from the gibbet in their own country have not been the least industrious in fabricating and propagating calumny! Two of the states have manifest'd the most *finish'd* detestation of the federal government, and have openly avow'd against it sentiments of the most deadly hostility. An officer (*of*) under the constitution has had the hardihood to call on his fellow citizens to resist the "tyranny" of the federal government; and to add one more circumstance of degradation the power of the government is inadequate to the prevention of sedition: If the "sea of liberty" is to continue thus "tempestuous," May God grant us "the calm" at least of a limited monarchy.

Belmont

(*My God!*) Can it be that you who in conversation with me, have so open extoll'd the characters of those undaunted and patriotic heroes who gloriously effected our emancipation from the chains of a foreign despot, can it be, I say that you are now for crushing our liberties and sur-

rendering them into the hands of a domestic (*one*) tyrant? Can it possibly be that you wish to see trampled under foot the freedom of your country? and is that maxim of tyrants that "Republican governments cannot be perpetuated" to be verified under our meridian?

Grenville

If you think my sentiments favorable to despotism you very much misconceive them. It is beyond your power to point out a single syllable of mine which conveys that idea. A Limited Monarchy is the kind of government I have in mind when I speak of a strong government. The people of this country at the formation of the constitution having previously suffered exceedingly from the oppression of the British, and having but just emancipated themselves from their tyranny were very (*excessively*) jealous of everything British, and of course were exceedingly cautious of admitting principles of government recognis'd by the English. Owing to this very strong prejudice, they unfortunately omitted in their constitution some principles of the highest and most extensive importance the want of which has been fully elucidated by experience. These I wish to see admitted into our constitution, because, I believe them absolutely requisite to the perpetuation of American happiness.

Belmont

Grenville, the sole object of your arguments is to bring us back into the arms of England. They

are the arguments of the whole Anglo-monarchic aristocratic junta. But sooner than go back to the tyranny of that imperious nation may earthquakes and volcanoes bury in undistinguish'd ruin the whole American continent.

Grenville

That you, Belmont, should attribute my attachment to certain principles admitted by the British to a predilection for that nation does not appear at all extraordinary; 'Tis perfectly consonant to your usual want of candour; But, Sir (*despising the proverb "Can a good thing come out of Nazareth? and)* reflecting that a fountain not totally corrupt may produce some pure water, I choose to select what is good from whatever source it may come. I am far, very far, from wishing to invest any or all branches of government with unlimited power—On the contrary it is my desire that the provinces of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities be kept separate, that a limited constitution be preserv'd and that the powers of each department be (*limited*) enclos'd by strong (*barriers*) fences: Yet (*at the same time*) the experience of only thirteen years has amply evinc'd that the field of legislation is in some respects too small, and that the powers of the executive on which the strength of governments principally depend are few and too feeble, it is therefore my desire to extend the limits of the ground on which they act but at the same time to enclose that ground with adamantine barriers.

Belmont

(*For my part I cannot*) 'Tis impossible for me to conceive how (*it is possible for*) you (*to*) can be so completely blinded, so (*wound up*) envelop'd in your prejudice in favor of tyranny: For my part I have (*had*) experienced quite (*enough*) a sufficiency of it under our present constitution and how you can wish for more is perfectly astonishing. The aristocrats have more than once (*exceeded their constitutional limits though which were already quite too extensive and have thereby*) made encroachments on our liberties by exceeding their constitutional limits which of themselves were quite too extensive. The precedent of constitutional transgression is establish'd and threatens with furious impetuosity to bear away our freedom! But thanks to the industry of "Republicans" there is now a prospect of better times: Soon will the constitution which has been characteris'd as a "lilliputian tie" become a "lilliputian tie" indeed—It must fall a sacrifice to freedom. Then from its ashes will spring up a system of principles consistent with the "genuine rights of freemen."

Grenville

Pray, Sir, what kind of system would that be? What kind of constitution do you want?

Belmont

I want one completely destitute of those nonsensical aristocratic checks and balances which serve only to clog the operations of government:

Instead of one which speaks only of the rights of rulers and tyrants, I want one which recognises not only the rights but the power of the "sovereign people"—one similar to the old confederation or to some of those constitutions which were form'd for the French republic between the downfall of Monarchy and the establishment of consular despotism.

Grenville

You could not have produc'd an example which tends more directly to (*establish the truth of*) corroborate my opinion. Those constitutions were (*certainly the most*) beautiful theories (*the world has ever seen*); but they were no more fit for the government of that nation than ships of paper for the purpose of merchandise. Though every part of a constitution should be deem'd sacred and inviolable, yet the fickleness, the licentiousness and the ignorance of that people were so great that their rulers (*were necessitated*) thought it necessary to transgress their constitutional limits and in consequence of that transgression have exercis'd a tyranny unparallell'd in the annals of despotism; and 'tis remarkable that ever since the abolition of monarchy at which time a very democratical constitution was adopted, they have been verging back through a series of stronger and stronger constitutions to their ancient despotism, and they now have (*now*) a government, which on account of its energy bids fair to be permanent, (Lawrence enters) and under the influence of which (*General*) Bounaparte has been able to restore a general

tranquility to the nation and in the space of only two months to shake to its foundations the throne of the German Emperor! If you wish for another example, I will produce that of Great Britain. Her government is by no means so concentrated as that of France; Yet under its auspices she has carried the arts and sciences to a very high degree of perfection, has render'd her soil [which by nature is (*poor*) not above mediocrity] productive of everything necessary for the happiness of man, and at the same time has (*preserv'd*) attained the first rank among nations. The (*forceable*) powerful government of that country places her in a proud situation. She has long been and still continues the mistress of the ocean, and while the independence of other nations has been trampled under foot, she has stood firm amid the convulsions of falling empires, the only European refuge of arts, sciences and everything that dignifies human nature.

Belmont

Lawrence! (is not) Does it not excite your warmest indignation (*excited when you*) to hear an American so warmly advocating the interest of the British? To my unspeakable regret & mortification I find that those (*God like*) generous sentiments which once actuated the breast of Grenville and prompted him to resist the aggressions of tyranny have quitted their ancient residence: He who once pray'd for the success of republicanism now advcates the cause of despotism! To me Sir 'tis astonishing that a

man of common sense should attempt to defend even the stronger principles recognis'd by our constitution, much (*less*) more those of monarchy; but however surprising, it is but too true; the spirit of liberty (*is entirely extinguish'd*) throughout New England is completely extinguish'd; the whole body of the Yankees with a very few exceptions, are bound down by the chains of superstition and priestcraft, and to their everlasting dishonor they are using no means to effect their emancipation: and I confess my surprise would not be great, if in one year from this time they should be legislating concerning the establishment of an inquisition: All this rascality originates in the hypocritical brains of those "black coated" bigots with whom this country is inundated. This disgraceful torpor has not yet gain'd extensive ground in the other states, but to prevent it the most vigorous exertions are necessary. If we do not preserve alive the sacred flame of liberty fire & fagot will soon assume sovereign & universal dominion.

Grenville

Lawrence, you perceive by Belmont's conversation the amazing extent of his prejudices. He has express'd the utmost venom against religion, & during the course of our conversation he has reproach'd for its aristocratical principles that constitution which does not possess sufficient energy for its own protection. This, Lawrence, has been the uniform language of all the opposers of the present administration. "Federal villainy and ecclesiastical imposture" have been

the darling themes of every disorganizer from Phillip Freneau down to James Lyon: Do you suppose Sir that the peacable & industrious Yankees can sit still and look in silence on such infamous conduct? Ever since the adoption of the federal constitution these wretches with unceasing industry have been attempting its overthrow: My wishes are but the consequences of their conduct; though I have been an ardent friend to the constitution & have ever felt myself much interested in its preservation yet when its energy is not sufficient to punish the traitorous disorganizers who have been alienating the affections of the people from the administration & who have calumniated the most God-like characters under heaven & when in fact nothing is sufficiently sacred to escape the most deadly invective I confess I wish for a change I wish for a government sufficiently energetic to crush the head of faction & trample into the dust these disorganising wretches.

Lawrence

Since gentlemen you have severally appeal'd to me as the arbiter of your dispute & since I am well acquainted with your favourite sentiments I will freely suggest my own. Although I believe gentlemen that you both love your country you will pardon me for saying that you both proceed too far in your favorite schemes. You Mr. Belmont are a disciple in the modern school of republicanism. You are an enthusiast for the rights of the people & for the exclusive utility of a pure democracy. Permit me Sir

to say that your scheme is totally impracticable & will ever be so as long as mankind sustain their present character. In proportion as a government is destitute of physical power, it must depend upon public opinion. Unless the public opinion is enlightened by information & directed by virtue, how can it discriminate between good and bad measure? & what motive will induce it to reject the one & embrace the other? Yet you will acknowledge that this intelligence in discriminating and this virtue in choosing are the pillars of republicanism. Remove them and the fabric tumbles to the ground. Where then Sir are the nations thus enlighten'd & thus virtuous?

The American nation have probably approximated nearer to this ideal perfection than any nation ever did; But Sir cast your eyes over Asia and Africa and you won't find a single spot of earth where your republican ideas will thrive; they be blasted in the very germ and dwindle into nothing. In Europe the case is not much better. Switzerland and Britain are almost the only countries which exhibit any semblance of national intelligence & virtue; The first of these has drunk so deep of the bitter cup of modern republicanism that she has fallen perhaps never to rise more; and Britain has been compell'd to assume an attitude so warlike & to strenghten the sinews of her government in so extraordinary a manner that it will be long before she will listen to the charm. In our own country then must the experiment be made, if it is made at all. But even here Sir it is my decided opinion that a greater

degree of liberty cannot exist without licentiousness. No honest man in the United States feels himself at all restrained in his liberty: We attend to our business in perfect security and enjoy the protection of the laws; What greater degree of freedom can be desired? Anything more would certainly impair our personal security & create the very evil which you wish to avoid. You have said Sir that the stronger principles of our constitution are indefensible. Was not the present constitution framed to supply the deficiencies of the old confederation?* That confederation like a crazy building shook with every blast & threatened to crush with its fall those whom it was rais'd to protect: Will you then revile this constitution for the very excellence of which the other was destitute? The frequent elections of our legislative and executive officers & their ultimate dependence upon the people give us the most perfect security against their encroachments. We who made can unmake them and reduce them at the expiration of their respective periods to the level of citizens. If our constitution possess'd less energy it would grow weaker & weaker from constant attacks & at length expire from mere debility. The New England states Sir have been characteris'd by you as the subjects of priestcraft, political delusion & lethargic torpor. I must be allow'd to say Sir that the very intelligence & virtue which I have before mentioned as the sole supports of republicanism have produc'd in New England that dignified calmness which you are pleas'd to style torpor. A very great majority of the people of New England are so en-

lighten'd as to perceive that the constitution and administration of our country are in general the best which human wisdom can devise & they are therefore resolv'd to support them to the last. The people of New England repel with manly indignation the charge of delusion and ignorance & you must pardon me Sir for expressing upon this subject that warmth which as a New Englander I shall ever feel when my countrymen are thus wantonly insulted.

Grenville

But Mr. Belmont you will certainly concede that the design of government is to promote the happiness of society and experience proves that happiness cannot exist without government; of course the existence of happiness depends on the permanency of government. Hence I argue that every government should be invested with powers adequate to its own protection; otherwise the end for which government was originally instituted cannot be answered. Now experience plainly tells us that our federal government is not sufficiently energetic for its own preservation. The consummate abilities of some of the greatest statesmen the world ever saw have but just rescued from the jaws of death our present form of government: Notwithstanding the utmost stretch of their wisdom it is on the brink of the precipice & anarchy threatens to show her head: What then but total destruction can we expect from the exertions of characters less unexceptionable? Hence I deduce the necessity of establishing a form of government containing within itself

energy adequate to its preservation, & that form must be a limited monarchy.

Lawrence

Mr. Grenville I perfectly agree with you in the general principles which you lay down but in your application of them to this country you are unquestionably wrong. The Federal Constitution with a few exceptions appears to me to be the very best which human wisdom can devise for a country like ours. I do not say that it would be the best for all other countries. Different states of society require different forms of government, just as the various magnitudes and proportions of human bodies demand corresponding magnitudes & proportions in the clothing by which they are covered. You think our constitution deficient in energy: But Sir in what has this deficiency appear'd? The government has crush'd without bloodshed two alarming insurrections, it has extinguish'd a formidable Indian war & still keeps those restless nations in awe by the warlike attitude of our frontiers. It has rais'd almost by magic a respectable navy which has afforded efficient protection to our commerce. The American cannon are at this moment riding on the seas of Europe & the waters of both the Indies. By the assumption of the debts contracted during the late war public credit is establish'd Sir at this moment superior to that of any other nation. An efficient system of revenue is found—such a system of internal regulations has been adopted as has produc'd an unexamp'l'd degree of

happiness throughout the nation—Our commerce is commensurate with the globe & notwithstanding our multiplied hopes from practical depredations every newspaper is fill'd with accounts of arrivals from all parts of the world. Our most retir'd forests on the banks of the Mississippi, the Ohio & the lakes begin to resound with the instruments of cultivation, & our whole country in her cities, towns, villages, hamlets & farms exhibits incontestible proofs of prosperity and happiness: Such facts Mr. Grenville evince to (*every*) my mind beyond all controversy the operations of an efficient & equitable government.

Grenville

But notwithstanding this Mr. Lawrence, the administration has been uniformly condemn'd. Invective has been the order of the day: No virtuous & dignified character who has had any share in the government, not even Washington has been able to escape the shafts of calumny; in addition to this in some parts of the United States, a large portion of the people are disgracefully ignorant; They are extremely backward to avail themselves of the means of knowledge. This want of information is not compatible with the existence of a free government & can be rendered tolerable only under a limited monarchy. (*exhibited*) (*villages*) (*villages*) (*hamlets and farms.*)

Lawrence

I lament Sir as much as any man the party dissensions which prevail in our country & the

universal calumny of which you so justly complain. But as the present rancour of party spirit deriv'd its origin from the peculiar state of the European World I entertain the hope that the fever will before long subside at least in such a degree that it will become tolerable. Calumny is the legitimate offspring of parties; If therefore there is any ground to hope for the mitigation of party spirit there is the same ground to hope for the cessation of calumny. But Sir freedom of enquiry will always produce variety of opinion & those who adopt similar sentiments will always unite until they have form'd a party. These parties ever have existed under free governments & ever will exist. Party spirit is the price of liberty & calumny is the price of distinguish'd stations & talents. The most that can be expected in any human society is that the majority will rally round the standard of order & good government. Such has hitherto been the fact in our country & I trust it will continue to be. I acknowledge that ignorance & licentiousness are prevalent in some parts of the union to an alarming degree but the national character in this respect is improving & I trust that even now there is so much intelligence and virtue in the great body of the people that they will still support the government of their choice in opposition to every party.

But Mr. (*Belmont*) Grenville I cannot without the deepest concern hear you advocate the establishment of a monarchy in this country. I am a federalist and my sentiments are in unison with those of the majority of the people of New Eng-

land & I solemnly declare to you that I will ever oppose as far as my influence extends the propagation of this idea. The people of America Sir are too enlightened & too virtuous either to need or submit to a monarchy. I repeat the sentiment Sir that we have a constitution perfectly graduated to our state of society. If it was more free in any extensive degree it would go to destruction—If it was more monarchical it would infringe the liberties of the people. In its present form I consider it as applied to this country a masterpiece of human sagacity.—Mr. Grenville since you have spoken so decidedly in favour of monarchy I beg your indulgence while I call your attention for a few moments to this subject. You will acknowledge the English monarchy since the conquest to be as fair an exhibition of the effects of that form of government as any on which history affords. Since that period thirty-four monarchs have sat on the English throne. Of those 15 comprehending in their reigns a period of 320 years have been either lawless tyrants trampling on all law and right or so lamentably weak that the kingdom has fallen into all the anarchy of the most dissolute democracy. This period if we deduct the duration of the republic comprehends nearly half of the whole time since the conquest. Of the remaining 19 sovereigns some have possess'd the best intentions but without talents sufficient to insure the happiness of their people. Others have been so exclusively attach'd to foreign countries & foreign alliances as to sacrifice anything to them, & even those who claim our highest admiration exhibit but imperfect models

of that excellence which ought ever to characterise a monarch. Even the memory of the great Elisabeth is tarnish'd with premeditated cruelty, hypocrisy & falsehood. My time forbids the proof of these assertions by the production of particular facts, but any person who will read the history of England will find that nation to have been groaning under domestic oppression, struggling with anarchy or exhausted by foreign wars during a very great part of its existence. Its court has at most times been the focus of corruption. The idea of the representation of the commons is even at this day little more than a pretense; & even in the enlighten'd reign of George 2nd Sir Robert Walpole was heard to boast that he could purchase any man in the kingdom & always insure a ministerial majority in the house of Commons. An hereditary monarchy Mr. Grenville must be supported by an hereditary aristocracy; of course a nation must perpetually be in danger of receiving very weak or wicked men for its princes & senators.

For these reasons I am confident the people of our country will never voluntarily submit themselves to a monarchy. I have but one life & that I will most cheerfully sacrifice in defense of the present constitution & in opposition to the claims both of monarchists & disorganizers. I will never consent to see in my county a corrupt court driving in splendor over the necks of the people, nor an ambit (*uous*) ious demagogue playing the tyrant with the cap of liberty on his head & the olive branch in his hand. These Sir are the sentiments of the great body of New

England people; and their rapid extensive migrations to every part of the American empire will essentially contribute to their dissemination. (*future of hatred of regularity and good order. They are fully persuaded that while a general diffusion of learning is the principal pillar of the constitution, the maintenance of the present government will contribute is its promotion & dissemination.*)

Belmont

Do you think that the poor degraded suppositious people of New England are capable of reasoning thus learnedly on the nature of government & of devising means for its support? Enchain'd by the fetters of priestcraft instead of diffusing salutary knowledge they inculcate upon the minds of the rising generation sentiments favourable to ecclesiastical domination. The unbounded influence of the clergy has almost pav'd the way for the introduction of popery and unless the spirit of vigilance is wide awake, we shall ere long be prostrating ourselves on the dust & kissing the feet of some Holy Father.

Lawrence

Your indiscriminate abuse of the clergy Mr. Belmont is indicative of a total want of candor and I am sorry to say of great depravity of heart. No class of men in society are better friends to the liberties of the people than the clergy of New England. They are the unceasing advocates of science, good order & good morals, & no class of men appears less infected with the de-

moralising ambition of the present day. During those perilous times when the stoutest hearts despair'd of America's success the clergy nobly stood forward & by their tongues & pens stimulated their drooping countrymen to the combat, & to the everlasting honor of the American clergy be it remember'd that no class of men ever embark'd in the cause of liberty with more firmness and intrepidity. Since the revolution their patriotic exertions have been equally meritorious. But it has not been unusual for men after having render'd to mankind the most important services to meet with ingratitude!

Grenville

The more invective I hear the more I wish for a strong government. History sacred & profane as well as our own short experience proclaim in language louder than the thunders of heaven, that for turbulent and licentious nations governments of persuasion are no better than scarecrows & fit only for the patriotic & enlightened citizens of Utopia; & unless we soon adopt an energetic government I expect to see this country plung'd from the precipice on the brink of which she now totters to the depths of infamy & ruin.

Belmont

The History of the world from the most ancient times to the present day proves that kings are but friends I shall therefore consider the man who attempts the introduction of monarchy into

this country as a foe not only to the present generation but of millions yet unborn.

Grenville

And I shall ever look upon that man who attempts to introduce into his country those demoralising principles that have shaken the foundations of civil society and produced incalculable misery throughout Europe as an assassin not only of those now on the earth but of remotest posterity.

Lawrence

Our present government is a mean between monarchy and democracy; it partakes of the evils & advantages of both. The extensive national prosperity which has been the effect of its adoption loudly demands its preservation. Should the violent efforts of parties accomplish its destruction, that event would most certainly produce the triumph of despotism. Liberty which in '75 stimulated the American patriot to die for his country would then be recollected only as a fascinating dream. The aged father would go down to the grave with the most melancholy anticipations for the fate of his posterity. The philanthropist would drop a tear when reflecting that fetters & chains are the lot of man. Posterity weeping over the tombs of their ancestors would mourn the vanity of human institutions & in their fate perceive the transitoriness of earthly grandor. Republican governments would then be considered as "transient meteors" which excite

the admiration of the world for a few fleeting moments & then disappear. (*But gentlemen*) To prevent their dismal consequences let us resolve to support our present government, & dismiss our theorising plans of pure democracy and limited monarchy. In either case we should be equally slaves. In the first to the dreadful tyranny of the sovereign people and in the last to the more regular despotism of an individual sovereign & a corrupt court.

Our constitution with few exceptions is perhaps the best which can be devis'd for our country. If it continues to be administered with virtue firmness & dignity it will grow more solid with the resolution of time. As our uncultivated regions become populated, an indefinite number of states may be form'd each depending in regular connection upon every other, supporting & supported. We may then see a mighty empire circumscrib'd within the Mississippi, the lakes & the ocean & those great waters freighted with the produce of every climate. In short Gentlemen if we preserve the constitution inviolate there is no height of national greatness or private felicity to which we may not aspire. Let us then firmly adhere to it in every event & making Washington's valedictory address the guide of our political conduct transmit to posterity the invaluable treasure of a constitution energetic without tyranny & free without licentiousness.





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